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Disabilities Issues Committee

July 19, 2012
Mercer County Special Services School District
Elementary School, 2nd floor

Present: Scott Elliott (Progressive Center for Independent Living), Kimberly Schneider (MCTS), Tom Shaw (MC Office for the Disabled), Mel Crawford (DVRs), Joyce Yon (One Stop ES Manager); Beverly Mills (Mercer County Workforce Investment Board)

Opening and Introductions

The meeting was opened by Dr. Kimberly Schneider, Interim Chair for the WIB Disabilities Issues Committee.

Minutes from May 31, 2012 were reviewed and approved (1st Tom Shaw, 2nd Scott Elliott) with corrections previously provided by Tom Shaw. The minutes will be posted on the Mercer County website under Boards and Commissions at www.mercercounty.org.

Old Business

Kim opened the meeting with a review of agenda items discussed at the May 31, 2012 meeting. She reiterated the committee's main purpose is employment for people with disabilities. To this end we should focus on goals that are manageable and attainable.

Kim started the discussion about the committee pursuing presenting an award to a county business partner and/or employee. The goal would be to choose a business partner and employee to honor at the WIB quarterly meeting in October (also Disability Awareness Month).

Mel asked for more clarity. If this is the direction the committee agrees to proceed, is it the intent to acknowledge a business at each quarterly meeting? Kim answered it would be one honoree per year; the other members agreed.

Scott mentioned the Chamber honoring a business after our recognition of an employer/employee. We will need to get behind them in their effort.

The committee agreed with Scott; Kim added through the WIB quarterly meetings in October we can annualize this event.

The committee further discussed the importance of press coverage and to have a picture of the committee for the webpage. Scott further added that the event will also highlight how a business assisted a student with transitioning. Also, what has been effective from the standpoint of the business?

Committee members mentioned a few local employers with a track record such as **Wake Fern Foods**, the **Pennington Quality Market** and the **Marriott**. Tom offered that Kelly Borden would be a good contact; Mel added that we should also reach out to front line staff to help narrow down the selection.

Judy suggested we make it more competitive among the companies being considered. We should also gather facts about these companies for the presentation.

The committee also agreed with Judy's suggestion to have gold, silver and bronze categories. Mel suggested listing all the companies that were considered along with the winner.

Kim said we need a form to use as a guide --she volunteered to look at samples of other nomination forms to adapt our own. Tom and Joyce said they would email samples they have.

Additional suggestions included requesting a representative from the Governor's Office and issuing a Proclamation from the County Executive. We would also like all nominated companies to bring guests.

Kim inquired if we also want to honor someone transitioning or a veteran? Committee agreed veterans are a topic alone to be taken on at a later date.

Joyce mentioned the US Commerce Veteran Job Fair scheduled for September 12th at the Sun Center with another separate job fair on October 9th (same location).

Scott graciously volunteered to be the speaker at the quarterly meeting for the presentations.

Kim stated August 30th should be the cut off for all nominations. Judy asked if we would also consider nominating a non-profit agency; Kim said the criteria developed should determine whether a non-profit or consumer would qualify.

The timeline is as follows:

- **July 27th** Nomination forms released
- **August 24th** all forms in (sent to gjones@mercercounty.org); nominations closed
- **August 28th** Disabilities Committee to meet (10:00 AM -12:00) to select nominee(s) (picture of the committee and a tri-fold developed)

New Business

Tom distributed a copy of the White Paper prepared by the Mercer County Office for the Disabled regarding Transitional Services. Currently there is no action on Senator Sweeney's part – Tom will keep us informed.

Mel mentioned "**Building Bridges**," the newsletter sent out by LWD. Mercer County is scheduled to be featured in November, 2012 – we should make sure an article about the award presentation is included.

Tom mentioned the launch of the **Jobs4Jersey** site that matches information from jobseekers to employers.

Kim will follow up with Carol Lerner regarding the County Reference Manual – this is a resource manual than can be accessed on line. She will invite Carol to the meeting on August 28th along with Chris Cox if necessary.

Judy mentioned the DiscoverAbility Google group *Peer Learning and Leadership Network* (PLLN). This site allows anyone to post information or ask questions –this goes out to anyone who subscribes. Kim said this is a good source for parents who want to be kept abreast.

Kim also offered to ask the Commercial Art or Special Services students to come up with a logo design we can use on napkins or table tents at the event.

Next meeting: August 28, 2012 (10:00 AM) Mercer County Special Services Elementary School (2nd floor conference room).